

Top Secret

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Saturday 1 October 1977

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Saturday, 1 October 1977.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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USSR: Brezhnev's Constitution

25X1 [] The USSR draft constitution, published on 4 June and scheduled for final approval at the Supreme Soviet session that opens on Tuesday, is clearly intended as President and party leader Brezhnev's political testament. A test of Brezhnev's power will come as the Soviet leaders select a man to fill the new position of First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Presidium.

25X1 [] The document largely codifies institutional arrangements and policies that have evolved during the Brezhnev years; in particular, it spells out the role of the party more explicitly and gives it pride of place in the Soviet political system. The charter will also give Brezhnev, as head of the Supreme Soviet Presidium, the legal justification--in addition to his inherent party rights as General Secretary--to monitor the performance of the Council of Ministers.

25X1 [] Soviet sources have predicted that the new constitution will contain only one major amendment to the draft published in June--an amendment defining the responsibilities of the person who holds the new position of First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Presidium. Although the post could remain vacant for weeks or even months if the leadership is unable to agree on a candidate, the job could be filled at the session of the Supreme Soviet that opens on Tuesday.

25X1 [] In any event, a clear picture of the job's importance will begin to emerge only after the first appointee has been in office for some time. Only then will it be possible to judge if the post is likely to serve as a stepping stone to Brezhnev's positions as head of the party and chief of state. Unless the appointee holds Politburo or secretariat rank, the office could be of little importance, or even a dead end. Given these uncertainties there is no clear favorite to get the post.

25X1 [] If the office is invested with more than protocol duties and goes to Ukrainian party first secretary V. V. Shcherbitsky, then Brezhnev would be a major winner. If the post goes to Leningrad party boss G. V. Romanov, then Mikhail Suslov, the senior member of the Politburo in terms of service,

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would be the major gainer. Selection of more neutral figures--such as Moscow party leader V. V. Grishin or Russian Republic Premier M.S. Solomentsev--would suggest a stand-off between Brezhnev and Suslov.

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[] There are other possibilities. Party secretaries Kirilenko or Kulakov could take the job. Should either man be appointed while remaining a secretary, his status would be greatly enhanced and his prospects for succeeding Brezhnev as General Secretary substantially increased. Neither man, however, would want the post if he had to give up his position on the secretariat.

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[] The nationwide public discussion of the original draft during the past several months has still not clarified whether the arrangement by which Brezhnev holds both the general secretaryship and the presidency is intended to be a permanent one. The sensitivity of this issue is reflected by the fact the Soviets have not yet published the resolution on this subject adopted by the party Central Committee plenum in May. The question was similarly not addressed in the draft constitution published in June.

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[] When Suslov submitted Brezhnev's name to the Supreme Soviet in June as the leadership's candidate to replace Podgornyy in the presidency, he stated that the Party plenum in May "deemed it expedient" that Brezhnev simultaneously "occupy" both jobs. The day after, Brezhnev went beyond Suslov's formulation when he stressed that the plenum's decision was to "combine the posts" of general secretary and president. Brezhnev strongly implied that the two posts would henceforth be permanently combined.

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[] During the public discussion of the constitution, various amendments on a number of substantive and controversial issues were proposed. Some proposals advocated changes in the system of economic planning and management, others raised questions about the rights of nationalities and republics or other local jurisdictions, and still others addressed the question of private plots and other forms of private enterprise.

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[] Some took up the cause of judicial reform and the need for safeguards to protect the Soviet citizen against the unlawful actions of officials. Finally, there were several proposals

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that appeared designed to serve as a safety valve for the release of accumulated dissatisfaction over petty grievances, as a survey of the degree of influence of various influential groups in society, or as a barometer of the general mood of the population.

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[] The Party's high command will continue to chart the course of Soviet policy and development. Within this context, however, the major political impact of the new constitution will be to strengthen the Supreme Soviet and its Presidium in comparison with the Council of Ministers. The Supreme Soviet will apparently be given the nominal right to decide all matters of state, economic, social, and cultural developments, and the more significant right to check on the execution of decisions by the Council of Ministers.

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[] Supreme Soviet deputies will be able to address inquiries to government organizations or officials, who will be obligated to reply at a Supreme Soviet session. The system of people's control committees is almost certain to be transferred from the Council of Ministers to the Supreme Soviet, where it can be used to spotlight bureaucratic obstructionism.

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[] It also seems likely that the new constitution will avoid listing the ministries individually--as the 1936 document does--making it easier for Brezhnev to try to streamline economic management by reorganizing the ministerial structure.

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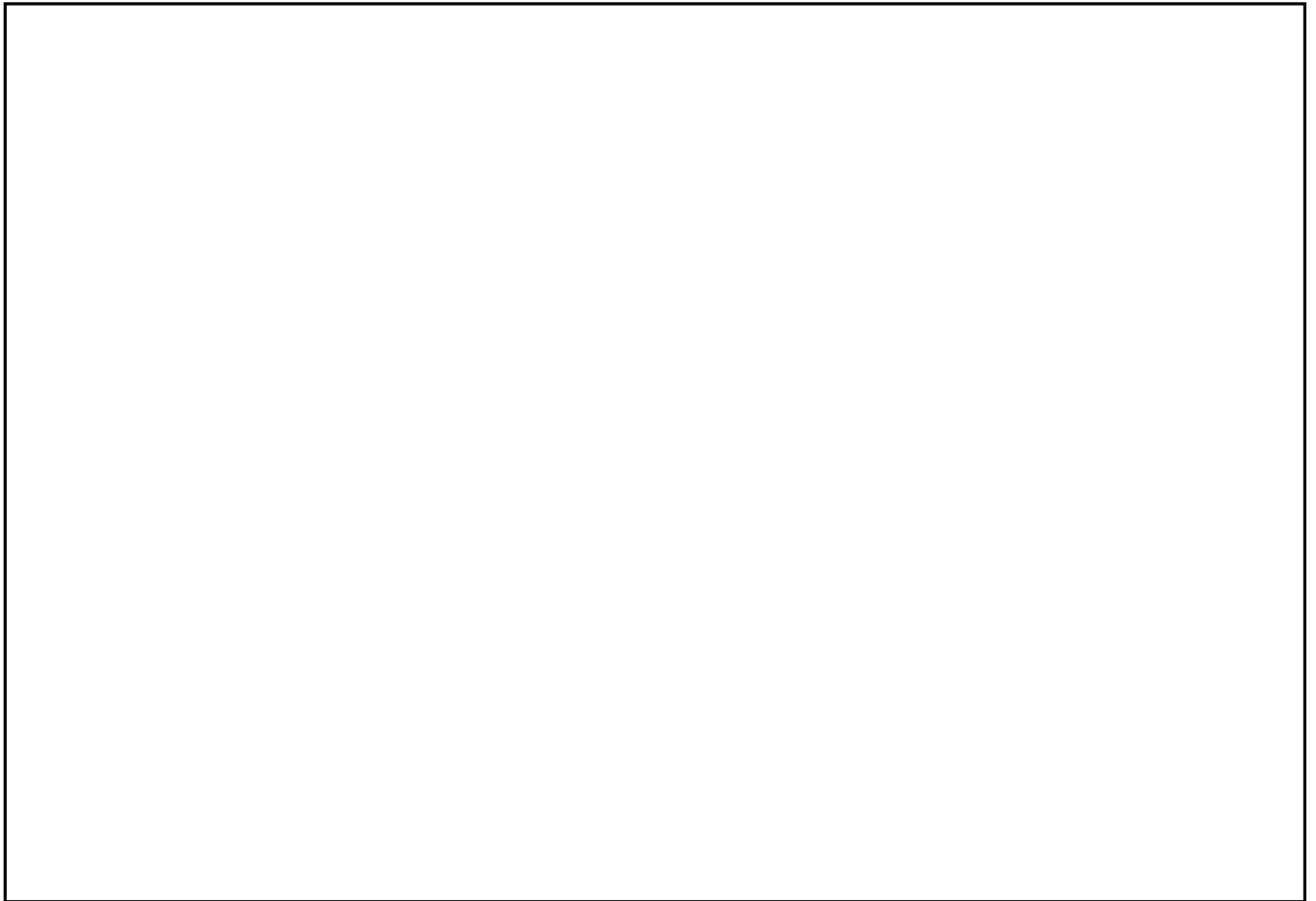
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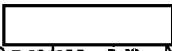


NAMIBIA: New White Political Party

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 Advocates of a multiracial political alliance to prepare Namibia for independence have split the territorial counterpart of the South African National Party. Until now, that party had represented the bulk of Afrikaner residents in the territory.

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 Dirk Mudge, former vice chairman of the National Party in Namibia, led a walkout of one-fourth of the delegates at a party congress. He is forming a new white party that, he says, will work with parties representing the 10 nonwhite ethnic groups in Namibia. If Mudge's party can get a sizable portion of the white residents to support genuine power sharing,

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a coalition of moderate ethnic parties might pose a strong challenge, in a preindependence election, to the militant South-West Africa People's Organization.

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[] Mudge has gained influence among moderate nonwhites in Namibia as a result of his performance at the Turnhalle multiracial conference that has been meeting intermittently since September 1975. As chairman of the committee for drafting a constitution, he reportedly encouraged solidarity among the nonwhite delegates and sought concessions from white hard-liners. The draft constitution that the Turnhalle conference submitted to the South African Government last march, however, reflects such uneven compromises in racial interests that it has hampered efforts of the nonwhite delegates to broaden their popular support.

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[] Since April, when Prime Minister Vorster tentatively accepted a Western proposal for a preindependence election under UN supervision, Mudge has joined nonwhite Turnhalle delegates in calling for an alliance of ethnic parties with a platform liberal enough to gain broad nonwhite support in an open election.

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[] In July, Mudge figured prominently in a meeting that announced the formation of a Turnhalle National Front and also proposed that an election for a constituent assembly be conducted on a country-wide, one-man, one-vote basis. The proposal was a significant departure from the provision in the Turnhalle constitution that would have a national assembly chosen indirectly from legislative bodies in the ethnic homelands.

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[] At the National Party's territorial congress this week, Mudge tried to wrest the chairmanship from Abraham du Plessis, a hard-line white supremacist, but lost by a close vote. After the walkout, Mudge reportedly called for revisions in the Turnhalle constitution that would reduce the power of traditional tribal leaders and make the central government more responsive to the nonwhite majority.

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[] Two prominent nonwhite figures in the Turnhalle alliance have already publicly welcomed Mudge's new party. Other participants are likely to follow suit; the moderate Afrikaners' clean break with the hard-liners will unburden their nonwhite

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allies of the opprobrium of collaborating with a counterpart of the ruling party in South Africa. It is also likely that the new party will pick up support from the English- and German-speaking whites in Namibia who do not like the solid Afrikaner cast of the National Party and are more inclined than most Afrikaners to stay on after independence.

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[] South African Prime Minister Vorster commented publicly that the party split was regrettable, but he avoided explicit criticism of Mudge. Rather, he said, "it is encouraging that both groups subscribe to the aims of the Turnhalle conference." Vorster may have hoped his bland statement would nudge the Afrikaners in Namibia toward less grudging support of the Turnhalle National Front.

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[] The South African administration in Namibia has maintained the perquisites of the Turnhalle delegates since they completed the draft constitution, and largesse from Pretoria apparently has increased since the formation of the Turnhalle Front. Vorster's statement suggests that such support will continue, even though it may benefit Mudge's new party and irk hard-liners in the National Party.

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[] On the day after Mudge's walkout, the remaining delegates voted to disaffiliate from the South African National Party--a move Mudge had long urged to mollify nonwhite Turnhalle delegates who have regarded the link as flaunting the Afrikaner residents' first allegiance to South Africa. The move reportedly was adopted by unanimous vote in closed session, and it was decided to retain the name "National Party."

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[] It is likely that the disaffiliation vote was prompted from Pretoria. The official South African news service described the move as "a prelude to the scheduled independence of the territory."

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BERLIN: Demanding Diplomat's Visas

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[] //East German border guards are still demanding that US diplomats produce an East German visa when they travel between East and West Berlin. The incidents began early last month and have increased in the past week.//

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25X1 [redacted] //The East Germans are challenging the long-established "flash procedure" that US diplomats use when traveling between the two halves of the city. US officials show only the cover and photo pages of their diplomatic passports to the East German guards and do not obtain East German visas.//

25X1 [redacted] //The guards lately have maintained that this procedure is not sufficient because there is an "international border" between the two Berlins. When US diplomats have refused to comply, however, the guards have delayed them for no more than five minutes and then allowed them to proceed.//

25X1 [redacted] //The East Germans are not applying the procedure uniformly, and they seem to be distinguishing between officials from the US Embassy in East Berlin and those from the US Mission in West Berlin. The border guards have not yet challenged vehicles from the Mission. Even some officials in Embassy cars have passed through without incident.//

25X1 [redacted] //Since early this year, East Germany has been trying gradually to eliminate some of the few remaining signs of East Berlin's special status. The US Ambassador in East Berlin has recommended raising this latest "salami tactic" with the Soviets. [redacted]

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ISRAEL: Begin Hospitalized

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[] Israeli Prime Minister Begin entered a Tel Aviv hospital yesterday complaining of exhaustion and chest pains; his doctor, after examining Begin, said the Prime Minister is in good condition.

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[] Begin suffered a serious heart attack in late March and was hospitalized for a couple of weeks shortly after the national election in May when he complained of chest pains.

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[] Finance Minister Simha Ehrlich has acted as prime minister when Begin has been out of Israel and probably would act in Begin's stead should the Prime Minister have to remain hospitalized for some time. It is not clear who would succeed Begin if he dies or is incapacitated for a prolonged period. Ehrlich and Defense Minister Ezer Weizman probably are the leading contenders, but neither enjoys widespread support in Begin's Likud Party.

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25X1 [redacted] Over the short run, no successor would be likely to establish anything approaching the unquestioned authority Begin now commands in his party and coalition. This likely would mean--at least initially--a weaker government. The coalition partners would be especially disinclined to deviate from Begin's hard line on peace negotiations with the Arabs. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] ANGOLA: Diplomatic Relations

25X1 [redacted] //The Angolan Government plans to complete shortly the establishment of diplomatic relations with a large number of Western and nonaligned states. The move reflects a desire by President Neto to diversify the bases of support for his government while retaining friendly relations with the USSR, Cuba, and other Communist states.//

25X1 [redacted] //Both the UK and Canada expect to announce the establishment of diplomatic relations with Angola soon. The UK hopes to send a charge to Luanda within a month; the Canadians will accredit their High Commissioner in Nigeria to Luanda.//

25X1 [redacted] //The Angolans have also taken steps to establish relations soon with Finland, Norway, Austria, Spain, Jamaica, and South Yemen. Angola has already sent ambassadors to Italy, Portugal, Algeria, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Nigeria, and the UN.//

25X1 [redacted] //The Angolan Foreign Minister meanwhile has announced plans to visit Portugal on his way back to Angola following his appearance next month at the UN General Assembly. The Portuguese and the Angolans both place a high priority on improving relations, and the discussions probably will focus on bilateral issues, including plans for the repatriation of about 1,000 Angolans who fled to Portugal during the Angolan civil war. [redacted]

CHINA: National Day Celebration

25X1 [] China celebrated its National Day yesterday in standard fashion with a reception attended by the top leaders and a joint editorial in the nation's three major papers. All active, Peking-based Politburo members were present, and once again they were listed in the Chinese equivalent of alphabetical order. The editorial stressed familiar economic themes.

25X1 [] Peking has yet to provide a full listing of how the new Politburo members are ranked, which suggests that the Chinese have still not fully decided on the pecking order. The place of Peking Military Region Commander Chen Hsi-lien in the order may be particularly sensitive. Chen has been the sixth-ranked Politburo member, but rumors have circulated in recent months that his star is waning. The Chinese may also be delaying the announcement because some Politburo members are changing their nonparty posts.

25X1 [] Canton Military Region Commander Hsu Shih-yu, who many Chinese believe will be transferred to Peking soon, was not listed as attending the festivities in the capital. Apparently he was at celebrations in his province.

25X1 [] The New China News Agency reported that Chou Yang and Hsia Yen, major cultural figures who were vilified by the leftists during the Cultural Revolution, appeared at the reception. Many Chinese will see their return as yet another symbolic rejection of the Cultural Revolution and as a sign that Peking intends to continue rehabilitating senior officials who were purged by the left.

25X1 [] The editorial broke no new ground. It focused on the domestic scene and stressed the need to work hard to build the economy. It barely touched on foreign policy and repeated only standard phrases on Taiwan, the US, and the USSR. []

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BRIEFS

Cuba

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[] Cuban President Castro reportedly is planning to travel to the USSR in November to attend the celebrations marking the 60th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. He apparently will stop briefly in East Germany en route. Castro traveled to both countries last spring following a month-long tour of Africa and the Middle East.

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[] Castro's presence at the celebrations will symbolize the continuing close Soviet-Cuban relationship. While in East Germany, Castro will probably continue Havana's campaign to solicit additional assistance for Angola. []

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India-Bangladesh

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[] The agreement signed yesterday between India and Bangladesh on the division of the waters of the Ganges is a major step in resolving a longstanding problem in bilateral relations, but it could increase tensions between New Delhi and the state government in West Bengal.

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[] The dispute arose because India constructed a dam--the Farakka Barrage--to divert water to Calcutta to flush out the port. Dacca said the diversion was seriously affecting the Bangladeshi economy. Efforts to negotiate the amount of water each country would receive were unsuccessful for several years.

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[] The agreement reflects the new Indian Government's efforts to improve relations with Bangladesh. The accord specifies the amount of water each country can take from the river during the driest season. Bangladesh was allocated significantly more water than the Indians had previously been willing to allow, and Calcutta will receive about half the amount officials in West Bengal say is needed. []

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Turkey-Greece

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[] According to Turkey's semiofficial news service, the Turkish and Greek Foreign Ministers will meet today to discuss bilateral issues. Both men are in New York attending the UN General Assembly.

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[] The talks will serve primarily to keep open the lines of communication between Athens and Ankara on such touchy matters as Cyprus and the Aegean dispute. Neither side is likely to break new ground. Greek leaders are already preoccupied with next month's parliamentary election. The Turks are similarly distracted for the moment by domestic concerns, notably the economy, and have decided to adopt a wait-and-see posture regarding Cyprus until the Greek Cypriots elect a new president in February. []

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Denmark

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[] Danish Defense and Justice Minister Orla Moller is expected to resign at any time. Earlier this week, he had announced his intention to retire from political life at the next election, but his decision to quit now was unexpected.

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[] Moller's successor probably will be Poul Sogaard, the ruling Social Democrats' parliamentary defense spokesman, or Poul Nielsen, a Social Democratic member of parliament.

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[] Prime Minister Jorgensen may take the occasion of Moller's resignation to make other cabinet changes, but the US Embassy does not expect them to be announced until next week. []

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